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PUBLIC HEALTH REPORTS.

UNITED STATES.

Use of adrenalin by immigrants to conceal the existence of trachoma.

[For the information of officers on immigration and quarantine duty.]

Certain officers of the Public Health and Marine-Hospital Service have noticed for some time past on evertting the eyelids of some immigrants that they presented a peculiar blanched appearance. At first it was thought that this was due to the treatment which they might have received prior to embarkation. Recently, however, several hours after the first inspection was completed and all suspicious cases had been set aside, it was decided to make a reexamination of the entire number. While this work was going on a number of additional cases of trachoma were found. Upon following some immigrants behind a convenient inclosure, they were found to be busily engaged in instilling a substance into their eyes, which subsequent investigation showed to be adrenalin. Experiments with this drug proved that if instilled into the eyes of mild cases of trachoma practically all evidence of the disease could be obliterated for about one-half hour. To sum up, then, it seems that on arrival at port and just before the medical inspection was made they had been in the habit of instilling adrenalin into their eyes.

[Reports to the Surgeon-General, Public Health and Marine-Hospital Service.]

Report of attendance at the Seventh Annual Convention of the League of California Municipalities.

By Passed Asst. Surg. RUPERT BLUE.

[At the request of Doctor Foster, secretary of the State board of health, Passed Assistant Surgeon Blue was detailed by the Bureau to attend the annual convention of the league of municipalities at Santa Ana, Cal. The following is his report:]

SAN FRANCISCO, CAL., November 25, 1904.

I have the honor to report that in compliance with Bureau order of the 7th instant, I attended the Seventh Annual Convention of the League of California Municipalities at Santa Ana, Cal., November 16 to 18, 1904, as Service representative in sanitary matters.

The purposes of this organization, as expressed in the articles of association, are to "promote systematic collections of information relating to municipal affairs, to foster the exchange of suggestions between municipalities on matters of municipal interest, to propose and, so far as possible, influence legislation necessary to proper municipal administration and growth, and to generally interest the public and advocate all ideas tending to bring the municipalities of California abreast of the best municipalities of the country."

The convention met in the council chamber of the new city hall of Santa Ana, at 11 o'clock, November 16, and was called to order by the Hon. Frank P. Frary, the president of the league.

The first business to come before the convention, after the roll call of delegates and the address of welcome by Mayor S. H. Finley, was the roll call of cities. As the chairman announced the name of the city, the mayor, or some other representative man, arose and briefly recapitulated the work that had been done and the improvements in contemplation, giving such statements as were most likely to benefit his city. If further explanations were necessary delegates asked questions which always brought forth the desired information. Individually and collectively the delegates displayed a lively and commendable interest in the work of their neighbors. If a saving had been effected in the cost of lighting, paving, or building by any one of them, then all wished to know how it had been done and, if it were possible, to obtain similar results in their respective cities. This was the most interesting and instructive part of the programme. Lengthy discussions being allowed the entire first day and part of the second were taken up in the consideration of lighting, street and sidewalk paving, road building, and other civic methods of importance to the municipalities.

Many of the towns and smaller cities have given considerable thought to the proper disposal of sewage, and have in operation septic tanks and sewage farms; but, on closer inquiry, I found that the system described was not the one to be depended on to give the best results, at least not when the population has increased much beyond present bounds. Air-tight chambers for the anaerobic process, and aerobic filter beds for the further purification of the effluent were, as a rule, omitted from the system in vogue. For example, the one at Santa Rosa was constructed of wood, that at Yreka had simply the soil as a floor, and one was described as having no roof, the builder simply depending upon the scum which forms on the top of the effluent.

The second day of the session opened with the resumption of the roll call of cities. Then followed the reading of communications, reports of committees, and the annual report of the secretary, Mr. H. A. Mason. The league was shown to be in a flourishing financial condition, and it was stated that the library, which had been previously authorized, would be an accomplished fact in the future.

A spirited discussion arose in connection with the report of the special committee on the purchase of city supplies, the chairman having recommended that municipalities, following the custom of private corporations and some eastern cities, should have a special purchasing agent. No action was taken, and from the diversity of opinion expressed it is not believed that the league will definitely settle this matter for some time to come.

December 9, 1904

The afternoon session brought up the report of the second special committee, that of the regulation of the prices of gas by municipal corporations. Mr. Loucks, city attorney for Pomona, recited the experience of that city in setting an arbitrary maximum rate for gas and detailed some of the litigation which grew out of the measure. The case is still pending before the State supreme court. The regulation of the sale of city franchises to corporations came up for some slight consideration, which took no definite shape.

Following the franchise discussion the question of garbage disposal was introduced by Passed Assistant Surgeon Blue, who in the course of his remarks advocated cremation at the expense of the municipality, and described some of the methods in use in eastern cities.

Mr. Benham, a representative of a San Francisco firm, read a paper describing a process by which the heat energy evolved by the combustion of garbage could be turned into power for use in developing other municipal utilities. This furnace, the Meldrum destructor, was operated simply by burning garbage, no other fuel being required. A very high temperature could be maintained for the destruction of the gases of combustion and for the purpose of preventing the smoke and ash nuisance.

These matters, together with the mention of septic tanks and sewage farms of the day before, comprised all that pertained to sanitation upon the programme. Sanitary street sweeping would have come up, however, had there been time for the transaction of all business before the convention. In response to an invitation many of the delegates on the evening of the second day went over to Riverside, a near-by town, to inspect the street sweeping machine recently installed there. Several of these machines are in use in the cities of California, and the writer took occasion, while passing through Los Angeles, to observe the practical working of one of them. The dust nuisance is effectually prevented by a suction apparatus of fans driven by steam or gasoline power, the sweepings being collected in a receptacle which requires to be emptied only three or four times during the night. The streets appeared very clean after the sweeping. A large part of the programme, embracing papers on the important subject of the "Beautifying of towns and cities," had to be cut out entirely on account of the lack of time. A paper on this subject by ex-Mayor Phelan, of San Francisco, was read by title only.

The morning session of the third day was largely taken up by papers and discussions on the oiling of roads, road building, and other "timely topics" in the form of questions. In the afternoon came the election of officers for the ensuing term, which resulted as follows: Mayor L. O. Stephens, of Fresno, president; H. A. Mason, of San Francisco, secretary; place of next meeting, Chico, Cal.

The league has a membership of 100 municipalities, an increase of 70 in seven years. At this convention there were 34 of them represented by about 64 delegates.